

Cottesmore Wednesday May 31st

Moved over here yesterday afternoon. Visited all of the fields in the past 24hrs and everything is in excellent shape. The SOS is doing a splendid job of taking care of us before take-off. Just about our every wish is granted, cots, blankets, mess kits, cooks, and the chow is well/ above average. These troops will enter combat with a much higher morale than we have ever had before, regrettably they will lack some of the condition and toughness of our African trained troops. D day remains Monday, June 5th. Everything is in readiness, even with the new mission I want to come back from this one, much more than I have ever wanted to come back before. I am not as uneasy about going in as I have been before although it is certain to be a hell of a rough fight, those of us who have been there before are all a bit more certain of ourselves and of our ability to handle anything that develops, there are not so many unknowns this time, it is the unknowns that bother the newsoldier.

Cottesmore Friday June 2, 1944

Started the rounds talking to the 505th Hq and 1st Bn at Spanhoe at 1030 ended with the 2nd and 3rd Bns at Cottesmore at 1800. During the interim spoke to all Bns at all fields. Most interesting, not sure who enjoyed it most, I certainly had a lot of fun, at this stage of the game they are tops to talk to. Finally evoked some spontaneous cheers after twenty years of waiting. Their morale could hardly be improved upon. With Gods help they will do their job well and return. Last night had a conference with all Bns COs and Regt COs. Final conference. Gave the Regt COs the date of D day, still June 5th. Afterwards attended a training exercise in reorganization and assembly. Back to Cottesmore by 0115. Mr Walton of Time and Life and Sgt. Bucknell of Stars and Stripes joined yesterday. Lt. Col. Bolland recently assigned to the Division joined the Task Force staff yesterday in order to get shot at. He does not look very good. It is a shame the number of graduates who are definitely inferior officers. This should never be.

Cottesmore, Saturday June 3, 1944 D-2

Over to Saltby at 1000 and talked to entire serial on the reorganization and assembly plan. Difficult to say whether or not it will work, the degree to which it will work is the degree of enemy resistance. Short conference with Gen R at noon. Over to Div Hqrs at Braunstone at 1500. Read the mail, called Val, studied the situation. Anti-airborne obstacles are appearing all over the operation area, some in the fields in which we are going to jump. I figure that they are a desperate last minute

measure that it is hoped will deter a commander from committing his A/B troops in those areas. Actually I do not see how they can be very effective. They may cause some casualties but hardly enough to be decisive. Dinner at the house with Gen Clark present. Gen Ridgway decided afterwards to go in by parachute. An unusual plan and one that hardly stands up on analysis. As it appears to me he is particularly interested in getting a parachute combat star but this would hardly seem to be proper reason for abandoning the entire glider borne staff and Hqrs to go by chute. Gen Clark was strangely anxious for him to go by chute in a plane piloted by himself, after the decision was made he stated that he would probably not be able to pilot the ship because he must stay back here. Strange things happen. But at all events it does appear as though we will have an airborne division headquarters, it may be scattered a bit but it will all be there. Called Val in the evening. Away from her guileful influence I can question the wisdom of marrying her. Returned to Cottesmore at 2300 and then went to an assembly problem at Saltby at 2400. Worked well.

Sunday June 4, 1944 0800 D-1

Visited all fields during the day. Things rather well in hand everything has been provided for as well as we are able to anticipate our needs. Late photo coverage taken June 2nd shows considerable activity in and around Ettenville. The entire area of our landing as well as I can see it now will be a hotbed of fighting and activity. A hell of a place to put new troops but they must learn sometime. I wish sometimes that I were going in with the 505th, getting new units in hand under fire gets tiring after awhile. The 508 however looks as good as any new outfit that I have ever seen, if they cannot do it it cannot be done by green troops.

Monday June 5, 1944 1400 D-1

Received a postponement at 0900 yesterday. We can make good use of the extra time. All men were briefed anyway since it had already started. Visited all fields this morning. Troops are in top condition and morale couldn't be higher. They are ready anxious and confident. It will be a very mean and nasty fight if the German is better off than we figure him to be. I am going to get the AT stuff across the Mederet first then go to the assistance of the 507 and 508 on the bridgehead. Whether or not the bridge south of Ettenville is blown may prove critical and decisive. It is regrettable that security precludes its destruction prior to 0600 D day. I expect this to be my hardest fight and I hope my last with unseasoned troops such as the 08 and 07. They will do well as is becoming American parachutists.

Leicester Friday July 14, 1944

Took off on schedule, flight enroute to coast of France uneventful, many ground aids in the form of light signals of different makeup being used, a few squirts of flak came up from the islands off the west coast. Shortly after crossing the coast we entered a dense fog bank. The wing tips could not be seen. Upon emerging, then a few minutes from the DZ, my ship was all alone. The entire formation which was beautifully held and flown had disappeared. At the last moment several ships appeared in the sky at some distance. The red light had come on as per plan, the green light followed and after a brief check of the locality out we went, a river bed appeared in the distance it must have been the upper reaches of the Merederet. I was afraid for a moment that we were south of the Douve but I had remembered something of the Merederet turning west at a point north of our area. Upon opening there was a great deal of fire coming from the ground; some tracers were mixed with it and the crack of the bullets made it clear that we were the ones that they were shooting at. Off in the distance in line with our flight there was a concentration of firing of all types, houses or something burning in high flames, and to the right there was a lot of flak, some of it of large calibre. The fire from the ground seemed bad and I sweated out landing, however I hit hard in a clear spot in an orchard or pasture with a few trees and I could see someone land near me. It turned out to be Lt. Olson. No one bothered me as I freed myself from my harness and started out, Lt. Price of the G-2 section was encountered, he was as quickly lost. Olson and I moved East after checking our direction with a compass. We came in a few minutes to what appeared to be a wide marsh. I figured it must be the Douve or Merderet. From its size I thought that it must be the Douve but its location indicated that it must be the Merderet. We moved south and in about five minutes came across a large group of men assembling. It was my stick. Part of it had landed in the swamp, two men were hit coming down and two injured. Lt. Scherer had a broken leg. The river proved to be a serious obstacle. It was very deep even along the edges. There were fox holes and gun emplacements inland. More planes were coming overhead. Jumpers were coming out of them, especially to the North. Some of them went right out into the river. A blue assembly light appeared across the river on what appeared to be the far bank. I sent Lt. Olson to get what men he could and bring them to where I was. We continued to try to get our equipment or weapons out of the swamp.

A red light appeared across the swamp to the left of the blue light. I sent some of Hqrs men to it to direct all men there to assemble on me. We continued to struggle with equipment, practically none could be recovered in usable condition. Individuals and small groups of men started coming in. A sector was assigned to the 507 at once, Col. Maloney and later Col. Ostberg was put in charge of it or vice versa. It was immediately obvious that the men did not realize the seriousness of the situation. They acted as though they were on maneuvers, milled around in groups, no one taking control, all completely unappreciative that they were about to get killed if they did not act quickly. Olson reported in that there was a railroad across the swamp and that we could wade to it although it was very deep in places. I decided that we were on the west bank of the Merderet several miles north of LaFiere, we had to be, although the Merderet never looked this deep in aerial photos. I decided to assemble as many men as possible and move before daylight to seize the west end of the LaFiere bridge. It was evident that we were in a dangerous spot if at daylight we were forced back to the swamp by a superior force. It was imperative that we seize the bridge without delay, the only question unanswered was; how many men to wait for? They kept coming in. We were about ready to start moving about 4:30 when two gliders appeared overhead, cut loose, and landed several hundred yards away. I couldn't leave then without getting out the 57mm AT guns. Besides they would be very valuable to have in a fight at the bridge. There was a strong possibility that they contained part of the division staff. Patrols were sent out. A report was received that one contained a 57 and one a jeep that they in bad swampy ground that a big detail was needed to get the stuff out. About this time the first shots were heard west of the gliders. There had been lots of firing all around before this time but none of it obviously directed at our group. This was different, they appeared to be focusing their attention on us. Patrols were sent out increased twice until thirty men were at the gliders and the equipment had to be abandoned practically under water. Details at the gliders were now under rather heavy machine pistol and rifle fire. the gun and jeep were destroyed. Several men had been hit. The new men were a complete loss. They cringed in their holes unbeliving that the germans were shooting at them. No aggressive action against the german patrol could be started. The

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507th group of which I had at least 100 were completely ineffective. There was no control, no organization, no one able to get anything done. Col. Maloney was simply one man. He had no control over the regiment although he himself was brave enough. Ostberg was getting most done although he was having trouble. It appeared to me that all NCOs and junior officers ceased to function, they were waiting for someone to tell them what to do. Whether or not it would have been plain slaughter if the german attacked in force I am not sure. Anyway there were not more than ten germans firing. It was now too late to get to the bridge during darkness. We obviously would have to fight. The situation between our present position and the bridge was unknown except that there was enemy there. How many? Were we even at the bridge or north of the bridge as we figured? As a combat force our own troops were at the moment with few exceptions ineffective. ~~It~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ The blue and red lights continued to burn on the far bank. Word was received that Col. Lindquist had moved down the RR with 100 men a few hours earlier. Patrol said that they could not get to the blue light because of the depth of the swamp, Olson said they could. ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ Practically no bazookas or crew served weapons with their ammunition were recovered. No radios were recovered. I decided to move to the East bank, there pick up all available troops and move and seize the LaFiere bridge from the East side. It was evident that there was considerable fighting going on in the direction of what I supposed was S. Mere Eglise. Orders were issued and the move started. The 507 couldn't get their orders down, no chain of command, men were being left in their positions, the germans were closing in increasing their fires. We had to leave Lt. Sherer with the broken leg with the wounded. The move across the swamp started. We were fired at and several men hit during the crossing. The railroad was reached and the move south continued. To my unbelievable delight at LaFiere the 1st Bn of the 505th was encountered in perfect order under complete control CP set up and fighting to get the LaFiere bridge exactly as per plan. Elements of the 507 and 508 were mixed up with them. I left Maj. Kellam fighting to get the east end of the bridge and took all 507 and 508 men south along the railroad to force another crossing of the river south of LaFiere and get the west end of the bridge. He was having lots of trouble, losing quite a few men, although the german force appeared very small. They were well placed, well dug in, and tenacious.

It was impossible to cross the river. Too deep and swamp grass and no boats and Germans dug in on the far bank. The move was continued to ChefduPont. A fight similar to the LaFiere took place. Col. Ostberg and many men were hit. The east end of the bridge was seized by dark. The Germans at LaFiere were counterattacking using armor. Maj. McGinity was killed, many of the officers and men were hit. We managed to hold on. The 507 was given the Chef duPont bridge and a reserve formed of the 508. The 505 was doing OK as well as could be determined. I met Gen Ridgway at the LaFiere rr overpass. No contact with amphibious troops yet. There was comparatively heavy German fires of all types all during the night. The 508 was placed between the 505th left flank and LaFiere. The fighting continued all day. At LaFiere the casualties were particularly heavy all officers having been killed or wounded except a few lieutenants. A withdrawal started just before dusk in reaction to a very heavy German attack. The German force was building up on the opposite bank. A serious and perhaps disastrous situation was imminent. They managed to hold on and in fact restore the position. Three German tanks were destroyed on the bridge and many Germans killed and captured on this side. 91st Div. By nightfall this day the situation improved and contact was made with amphibious forces. Rumors had been rampant that there had been no amphibious landing. There was an attempt made at air resupply during these two days. The Germans recovered a great deal of it. I liked the way they shot at the places where the canopies landed. We didn't need to get the stuff immediately and it took their artillery off our necks. A crossing was forced at LaFiere about the third day. Contact was made with Shanley and a BN of the 508 on the west bank south of LaFiere about the second day. The division established two bridgeheads, LaFiere and ChefduPont and was passed through by the 90th Div. It had a frightful time. The 82nd passed through the 90th on the Etienneville-Renouf line and we moved to the west of the Douve where the 9th passed through. The German was by this time being completely routed. A billeting party met us in S. Sauver Vicomte, it was an advance party for a German regiment that was moving up to that locality. I spent some time with the 505th which had moved north on the left of the 4th Div all of the way to LaHam. One day while observing and assisting in an attack with them a message came over the SCR 300 that Slim Jim wanted artillery fire in a certain area. I hadn't asked for it but since the 505th knew where I was they asked for

verification. The german had many of our 300 radios, we were certain of this now. Many of our men were daily coming into our lines telling us of their experiences behind the germans. Millett had been captured. Batcheller's body had been found. The division doubled back and crossed the Douve at Buzeville and Etienville finally occupying a defensive position along the line Bois de Limors-Pretot. The 81 mortars of the regiment were able to be concentrated on onetarget. Very active patrols although a number of men were lost. Lt. Olson was hit by mortar fragments in the Bois de Limors. That was a bad place. I continued to visit each Bn CP daily and whenever circumstances permitted visited the company CPs. The high velocity artillery and mortars exacted a daily toll. The german was unable to use his artillery in mass as we use ours, probably lack of ammunition. There were many russians on our front. Ost Bns. They fought well. We occasionally blew up vehicles from our own mines. In one tragic case two vehicles and six men when mines removed with the safety fork replaced were hit on the shoulder.

Leicester July 19, 1944

Took a two day leave commencing at noon Saturday July 15th. Ar London about 1700 did some shopping and then went to 82. Val arrived about 1800. Dinner at home and went to the Milroy, a new place champagne could be had for 8 pounds per qt., Cordon Rouge 1929. Consumed two quarts and had a night. A close hit by a doodle bomb the next morning. They are very devastating, the blast breaks all windows for blocks around. Went to a movie in the afternoon and then to the Mirabelle for dinner. Very nice. Off to a lazy start Monday morning, lunch at Geros, very nice. Went to see a show, While The Sun Shines in the evening and back to 82 for dinner. An omelet containing shrimp. Val can come up with the damndest dishes. Talked to her and Eileen until after midnight then to bed. Val had to go to work Tuesday so I returned. Immediately upon my return I was called in by Gen Ridgway and told that he had been directed by SHAEF to form an A/B Corps and that further he had recommended that I be given the division. He later stated that Gen. Bradley and Gen Eisenhower had approved my being given the division and that I could be sure that that was all set. However my promotion to MG might take several weeks or longer because of the usual administrative difficulties. Then followed the usual old fashioned horse trading in key officers with Col. Eaton who represented Gen. R. I will keep Weinicke who will be my Chief of Staff. It now looks as though Ireland G-1, Winton G-2, Norton G-3, Morman G-4 will be the slate. The Asst CG is the toughest one that I have ever had to make. There is no one available who is fully qualified.

Leicester July 20, 1944 0740

No training being accomplished since 50% of the men are on furlough, checked about getting a line on things. Talked to Gen R and Doc re the staff. Wish now that this thing would shape up. Norton coming to duty today, Winton in a day or so. My period of resting is about up, I'm getting fat and lazy. Wish I knew what the next mission was going to be, hope that it is occupational. It is beginning to look that way almost.

Leicester July 23, 1944 0730

I have had a quiet and well-behaved weekend so far. Today is Sunday. Yesterday attended graduation exercises at Ashwell Camp with Gen R. The graduating class made a fine appearance. Left for Stanmore at 11:30 arriving for a conference at 1400. Conference was evidently called by Bagby or Henson, regardless of which one called it it was pointless and a waste of time. Since we had not received the agenda we were not prepared to enter into protracted discussions of what they wanted, it had to do with changing the SOP on A/B operations. My position as division commander appears secure, it has quite evidently been given the blessing of SHAEF. Last evening Gen Ridgway wanted to know again if I wanted George Howell as a BG and if not if I had no use for him my wishes in the matter would be transmitted to Gen Eisenhower and he would take care of the case, apparently reducing him. I told him that this was a hell of a thing to put in my hands, the reduction of a superior that had been a BG for a long time but that no matter what happened I did not want him as my assistant. Gen. R agreed with me and stated that he would report the circumstances to Gen Barkley, Eisenhower's DCS today. The organization of the staff continues. I am a bit worried about Weinicke as Chief of Staff, he is very intelligent but a bit lazy, a CS must apply himself relentlessly. Ireland will be OK as 1, Winton a bit impersonal but OK as 2, and Norton with a bit of experience brilliant as 3. Marin as 4 will be about very satisfactory. I will appreciate getting on my own. This is a difficult time when the old regime is still hanging on. I am sure that I can give the division life blood and warmth and give it a personality. It lacks that now. As soon as possible I want every man to know who I am and to talk to each of them. If I only had a better Asst CG. That is the most difficult problem of all. Lewis will be cantankerous and unpopular, parachutists will have absolutely no respect for him particularly since they all know of his breakdown in combat. They will never understand why he is Asst CG, but who else?

Leicester July 24, 1944 1500

Continued discussions with Gen Ridgway on the subject of an assistant division commander. If I had any classmate or friend who would fill the job I could have him and get him made a BG right now - and I can't do a damn thing about it. I told him that I did not want George Howell which may end in the reduction of George. After much palaver he suggested Gen Cutler whom I know but do not like particularly. He has a sour negative personality but is professionally capable. He is capable of commanding the division in case of my departure for any reason. So it looks like Cutler. Jerry Higgins is to be Asst CG of the 101st. I am going to try my damndest to have a tiptop division, it will not be easy in fact it will be very difficult, much more difficult than anyone realizes. The loss of the staff will be hard felt. We continue to waste a great deal of time, no effort being made at strenuous training because of our present postcombat policy of granting leaves to everyone. Idleness makes me madder than hell and people are loafing all over this place now so I am rather unhappy. The international situation is breaking nicely with a small revolution brewing in Germany and Guam in our hands. Had a meeting this morning at which time the matter of possible airlanding operations was discussed with all unit commanders.

Leicester July 27, 1944

Went to London yesterday to confer with ETOUSA JA and IG. re my new staff. The IG most cooperative, lined up Lt Col Dunnington who looks most promising. The JA rather difficult wanted to see something in writing before he would make any effort to be of assistance. Upon my return this morning I talked to Doc Eaton about the situation and it does not look so good. Eisenhower has held up all the papers, my promotion, Howell's relief, the formation of the Corps, so it goes. Saw Val for awhile. Eileen talks too much. She did not look so good and I am afraid that at times she does not think too charitably of me. Probably feels that I am a stuffed shirt. It will all probably affect Val and me sooner or later. Val is a grand person, I wish that she had a different job or no job. The division is still dogging along, training will be intensified next week.

Leicester Saturday July 29th

An officers dance Thursday evening at the Bell hotel at which I did not do myself very proud. This matter of how to behave as a general officer at a unit dance appears difficult of solution. Going as a stag is not too good since there is an unconscious resentment built against such rank cutting or wolfing. Dargging is hard on the drag since no one else will dance with her. Being too sober or, mein one is a bore and stuffed shirt, being a gay eager beaver is improper and conducive to loss of respect and consequently command. Should one not go to hops at all? Spent the day in reconnaissance of training areas. Had a tooth filled at the 505 in the afternoon. Dinner with Gen. Ridgway at Lord Trent's in Nottingham in the evening. By far the nicest affair of its kind that I have had the pleasure of being present at since

Sunday July 30th 1000

Graduation at the Parachute school, 175 student replacements. Capt. Rosen among those who matriculated. Reconnoitered the site of the coming review for Gen Eisenhower on the EM also laid out the problems for the coming training period with Jack Norton G-3. Went to Nottingham to a 508 prop blast in the evening, dragged Hillary Holloway, blue brunett and yum yum. Back at 5:30. Good training for my new driver. Weber's battle nerves finally bested him and he asked for relief.

Monday July 31, 1944

The first day of training under the new schedule. 504 off to a slow start. If Tucker does not do well it will be his scalp. I will not fool with him. A number of his men still of furlo. Had an interesting but brief discussion with Gen Ridgway on the merits or lack of merit of keeping a diary. Maybe something to what he says but I am going to give it a better try. I believe it imperative that one be kept in combat for official purpose if no other. The weekend was a typical weekend with the ~~enx~~ english taking a holiday. Unfortunately our soldiers are learning the english customs too well. Still nothing can be done about forming a division staff if Gen Ridgway leaves. He is leaving it up in the air and refuses to take any responsibility for the corps, it continues to keep the new division staff in a ridiculous spot. The Normandy affair is going great guns.

Tuesday August 1st

First Bn Ex at Big Moor, all night affair. Stopped in ~~Leicester~~ Nottingham to call on Hillary. A Div show "Kets Sing Together" in Leicester, very good. Called on Ireland, now a Maj.

Saturday

~~Monday~~ August 12th 1944

The longest period ever, and at the same time the most unsettled. Gen. Ridgway has been going to turn over the Div and then he doesn't. We have been threatened with almost immediate operational commitment and we don't. Training has been redirected and intensified more attention being focused on air landing. The results clearly point out the advantages of parachute operations both as a time and ship saver. Gen. Eisenhower came up for a review of the division yesterday. I had a feeling that I was under scrutiny, I still do not know if my recommendation for promotion has been forwarded to the states. Oddly enough I give little damn about it, feeling at this stage that I can command this division efficiently and well. I would like to take it in but another affair like Normandy makes petty things like promotion fade into insignificance. Have been seeing a lot of Hillary, an inordinately attractive girl. Valerie came up last night for a day or so, the first time that we have seen each other in weeks. She looks wonderful. The new staff is unquestionably the best in the business, I am quite proud of them. Would to god that they could take over and start running the division. The thing that I dislike most, feel most keenly, and am most uneasy about is the fact that neither myself nor my staff is getting any opportunity to command the division and yet we may have to take it on in any day on a few day's notice. Gen R and staff still hang around, it is a hell of a state.

August 16, 1944

Well, this is it. Gen Ridgway and the staff left a few minutes ago. I am in the damndest position imaginable. I just wrote the Babe a letter which follows in part: Well, there will be a lot of tch tching before we are through. I have a thousand ideas and I am going to carry them through, in combat and out, with zeal and determination come what may. Either this division will rise to heights of combat attainment in our service unprecedented or rush to oblivion. In either case I will be with it all of the way. To those of us who have had a lasting and firm faith in the efficacy of airborne troops as a means of waging war there is of course no doubt about the future of this or any other parachute division nor is there any doubt or concern really with what value posterity will place on what we do now. We are supremely confident of ourselves. I suppose that we would not be in the hazardous business we are in if we in the slightest

degree lacked this confidence. Since the day I entered this airborne service there never has been a dull moment. Always a new challenge, always a new horizon. That is the way it should be. Despite the alleged hazards and apparent uncertainties of it as a way of service we love it. With this abiding confidence in our professional creed, and a determination to excel in combat unmatched in any army anywhere, all airborne soldiers look to the future certain that they have a rendezvous with greatness.

Monday August 21, 1944

Well the summer flies and here we sit. Attended a conference in the office of Gen. Brereton the other day on the current continental situation. The necessity for several weeks of planning is working a hell of a hardship on the commitment of airborne troops. In the present affair there appeared to be an excellent chance to use them on the crossings of the Seine. AM Tedder wants to use them to invade Calais. Brereton calls his force the First Air Army. Ridgway watches the Americans and closer still watches Browning who has designs on the entire force. It is some clambake. My interests are solely concerned at the moment with the 82nd and that is a full time job. Prospects for commitment on the continent look rather remote at the moment, possibly in an occupational role.

Wednesday Aug 23rd

A field test for a bn of the 504 yesterday

Leicester

Wednesday Sept. 6, 1944

Sunday, August 27th attended a tea at the home of Gen. Brereton at Ascot. There given first intimation of an impending mission. Tuesday attended a conference at the Hqs of Lieut. Gen. Browning now in command of the British A/B Corps at Moore Park. Given a mission of participating in a proposed landing north of Tournai to seize and hold the crossings of the Escaut river to prevent German withdrawal. The drop was to take place Sunday morning at about 8:30. Participating were the Poles, British, and 101st US A/B Div. Plans were pushed, orders prepared, ammo etc issued, chutes issued troops disposed at proper airdromes all by dark Friday evening. It was raining and continued to rain more. The US armor continued to drive the Germans back actually threatening to get to our DZs before Sunday. They did, Sunday morning, besides the weather was lousy. Knowing the the armor was going to beat us to it Gen Browning changed our missions to seize and take over Lille, Roubaix, Tournai etc. so as to assist the

armor in its passage. A hell of a mission for A/B troops. But Gen Browning was not to be denied and for some unexplainable reason the high command was hell bent on getting the 1st US A A/B A in to the fight whether or not the commitment was decisive or even sound. Well, Sunday morning I was called to Moore Park, Gen Browning's Hqrs, and given a new mission. We were to jump of the west bank of the Meuse opposite Liege to again block the retreating Germans. The historic Liege gap. By now the troops were aware of the apparent lack of necessity of our participation in this type or role, or so it seemed. Again weather intervened and was conveniently and also typically lousy. The British ground troops were overrunning our DZ and LZ areas in addition. Consequently by Sunday night the mission was called off, we reverted to the US XVIII Corps, and back home we came a bit wetter but hardly the wiser. It was an interesting and physically trying staff experience. The new staff did wonderfully well. I do not believe that there is a better combat staff in the army, certainly not in the A/B business. Gen. Browning shed considerable of his professional aura and under pressure became the dishveled frustrated officer that so many of us are in combat. It was interesting to observe his functioning under these conditions. He unquestionably lacks the steading influence and judgement that comes with a proper troop experience basis. His staff was superficial in its fullest sense. They were all there and whenever possible, gave reasonable answers to questions asked but totally lacked follow up or even apparently an appreciation of what our requirements were. Why the British units fumble along, flub the dub as the boys say, becomes more and more apparent. Their tops lack the know how, never do they get down into the dirt and learn the hard way, and really the only way to fully learn. Our supply for example was to be A/B for ten days regardless of ground contacts completed. I regret that he is to no doubt be one of the most influential advisers to the supreme allied councils in post war days. He is personable and impressive but completely and entirely impractical. Gen. Ridgway is in for an interesting future in our War Dept blocking Browning's schemes. With Churchill and Roosevelt so close together little can, in the final, analysis, be done to curb Browning. Now, we are threatened with a drop on Dusseldorf or some similar German industrial area. Certainly the time has come when we must drop from here within a week or so, or move to the continent, or move to Asia. I am for the latter. This affair is practically wound up. I am going to have a difficult time adjusting myself to civil life and live in the US away from troops.

Leicester Thursday Sept. 14, 1944
Last weekend Valerie came up for a day returning Sunday.

I drove her down to London arriving at about 1400. At 1600 I received notice of a meeting at Gen Brereton's Hqs at 1800 so I took off arriving a few minutes late for the meeting. It was conducted generally by Browning and had to do with a new plan envisioning a drop for the 82nd to seize the bridges at Grave and Nijmegen and the high ground between Nijmegen and Grosbeek. That the plan would go through was all agreed to, Browning was to command it and had it all set up. The troop carrier lift was not set however. That was arranged at Eastcote Monday morning. After the conference I went to Moore Park to get the latest dope on the area from the British. Left there for Northolt and then took off for Leicester. Missed field landing at Derby and after securing an RAF truck arrived at the Glebe Mount house at 0030. Had a staff conference at once and put the G-2 section to work. After an allnight session they gave me their studies at 0530 and I took off for Eastcote at 0600. There DZs and LZs were picked taken to Moor Park and approved and upon returning to Leicester the tactical plan started. It was given to the regtl COs in about , actually 0800 Wednesday morning. There were many plans. The TCC could not make a turnaround so could not deliver the division in ~~three~~ days. The plan was D day 480 prcht and 50 gl, D+1 450 gl and ~~2x2~~ 400 gls. Resupply D+2. D day has been changed from the 14th, to the 15th, to the 23rd, and now to the 17th. Take off airdromes are not settled yet nor is the lift. This latter because they have been unable to decide whether or not the full TCC lift will be available or whether the bombers will do part of the resupply or all of it. The flak in the area is terrific, the krauts many. It looks very rough. If I get through this one I will be very lucky. It will, I am afraid do the airborne cause alot of harm.

Nijmegen, Netherlands, Oct 8, 1944

And so the Grave and Nijmegen bridges were captured as ordered. Also the high ground was captured and held. A very marginal performance and one that will not be duplicated in this war. The perfect airborne show. Tucker crossed the Waal at 1500 on D plus 3 and by nightfall the bridge was ours. Vandervort with the II/505 took this end. In this final effort we were aided by the Guards Armored Division. The Irish Guards one Bn of armor assisted Tucker in clearing out to the boating point, one Bn of Grenadier Guards helped Vandervort, and one bn of the Coldstream guards were made available to the

division as a reserve. At the time of the Waal Crossing the German 6th Para Division attacked in a coordinated effort hitting Beek and Mook and succeeding in penetrating the position for about 1000 yds at each place. The situation was very critical. Repeated attacks up until about four days ago have been made against the division position all without success. The latest have been very costly to the German. My relations with the British have been most satisfactory. Although I dislike their professional methods or lack of method I nevertheless find them superb to work with. We have gotten along well together. I am afraid that Gen Ridgway has resented our success and in a small way is rather jealous of Gen Browning's success. Unfortunately I am in the tug of war, right in the middle. In the heat of the third day fighting Gen Ridgway visited my CP and when now immediately approached left in a huff later writing a letter demanding an immediate explanation. Such a lack of trust and confidence between him and my command can only do us both and our units harm. I have therefore asked that I be relieved of command of the division and assignment to his corps, the XVIII. This is a big step but a necessary one at this point. We cannot continue to serve in a strained critical atmosphere. It is most regrettable that he is so sensitive about the British. Several years ago I would never have understood my feeling in a matter such as this. I am confident now that I can command a division or any unit successfully in any combat adversity. I can successfully train any size unit for combat as well. I know airborne operations as well as anyone in our service. I have been very lucky. Four combat jumps are a lot. I am ready to leave the service and try my hand at something new. I care not what. The only thing against this is a means of livelihood. I can fare reasonably well on what retirement I have earned. In the meantime I'll try anything. Whatever it is I want to get completely away from the army and war. This letter of Gen Ridgway epitomizes all that I have never liked about our army. After twenty years of service, the past three years as a parachutist, the year and a half in combat with this division, to have successfully undertaken an extremely difficult combat mission, then to be sent a letter by my corps commander asking for an immediate explanation in writing why I flagrantly violated the tenets of military courtesy during the heat of combat upon the occasion of a visit to my CP. He has not seen fit to make any remark, good or bad, of our battle. And worse of all I was extremely considerate and courteous and always have been. Time to get out of his outfit, perhaps the army too.

The division is still on the Nijmegen heights. One combat team is with the British XII Corps north of the bridge. Gen Horrock of the XXX Corps has been most anxious to use us in a ground role. Gen Dempsey of the Br 2nd Army spoke to me about it but I demurred. Gen Montgomery spoke to them about it, representing I believe Gen Eisenhower's views, and they decided on a defensive role until after their big attack at that time we are to return to our base which rumor has it will be near Rheims. Horrock has asked me to make a limited objective attack anyway which I did not enthuse over. This morning I meet Gen Browning at which time I will be transferred to the Br XXX Corps. Gen R will I suppose blame this transfer on me.

Nijmegen Oct. 12, 1944

Gen Horrock inspected the division yesterday. A hell of a nice person as well as a good general. I like him very much. Very human and closely interested in the well being and comfort of the soldiers, always the mark of a good soldier. No word from Gen. Ridgway. Sent Chief of Staff to his CP yesterday. Should soon hear something. Gen. Parks, C/S, First Allied Airborne Army came by the CP and spent the night. I do not know whether he was inspecting me and the division or not. At all events he got an eyeful I am sure. The British have been high in their praise of the division and Gen Horrock on his inspection, accompanied by Parks, spoke very highly of the division. Gen. Horrock and one of his Gs, Col. Jones, and I stopped by a haystack and had lunch during the course of the inspection. Gen. Horrock was very frank in his analysis of the future of England. He said that in his opinion England would be reduced to an outpost of the empire. Heavy industries would be prohibitive and in any future foray England would take a merciless pounding immediately. The heads of the government should therefore move to the American continent and establish a close relationship with the US government. He distrusts Russia, even at this point, very much. A separate peace would be greatly to her advantage. We are agreed that Japan must be reduced to a world nonentity and kept that way. She must never have military or naval strength again. France and Germany pose the most difficult problems. I am worried about my troubles with the XVIII corps, this is a hell of a thing to have on one's mind at a time like this, it detracts from my efficiency about 25%. It's a ridiculous situation. Nov 1st our date home

Nijmegen

Oct. 16, 1944

Accompanied by the regimental commanders and Col. March went to the XXX Corps CP at Wijchen and there met King George VI. A very nice person. Trying very hard to be nice to everyone. Except for his speech impediment an easy person to talk to. Gen. Montgomery and Gen Dempsey accompanied him and they were very nice. Gen. Montgomery an interesting study. He has, as the British say "no side". Nevertheless this lack of side is cultivated I am sure. I can understand why the troops like him. He has mastered the system of being personally ~~xxxxx~~ kind to the troops, using the chain of command, and being exacting with his officers. He is evidently ruthless when a change must be made. His trail of ascension to command is littered with the broken careers of strong but, from his viewpoint, unsuitable officers. Sent the C/S to visit the XVIII Corps in UK. He had a long talk with Gen Ridgway and Col. Eaton. Gen R said that he sent to latter in a moment of hasty judgement, that up to that moment he had not heard from me, and that the whole affair was to be regretted. He will see me about it later. I believe that I got out lucky although it is not over nor will it be as long as R is in the service with me. I hope that I learned a lesson of restraint. I must learn to not be hasty in anger, I've got to learn this. Gen. Parks was in from the First A A/B Army. He said that my promotion had gone forward from SHAEF to Washington. The most pressing problem now however is that of effective command under present conditions. The troops are in good spirits, rations are excellent and the enemy opposition measured in terms of casualties very light. But for this type of soldier it is not good to sit in a fox hole for weeks on end. Yesterday I suggested to Gen Horrocks that if the Canadians could not clean out the Antwerp estuary we could do it for them. Right now the entire war awaits the opening of Antwerp and the arrival of fillers, both personnel and supplies. Went to a movie of the Holland A/B operation yesterday. Very exciting, could hardly stay in my seat. Met a very interesting newspaper woman yesterday Mrs. Hemingway. The 13th A/B Division is on the way over, will arrive UK in December. CG XVIII Corps says that if Germany is to be given an A/B occupation this division will drop on Berlin. It appears as though we are destined to stay in this theatre. The move of the 13th over here makes it appear as though that decision was made at Quebec. The administration is dangling before the public the necessity of an international police force. Concurrently it is being built up of the A/B divisions in this theatre. Browning is getting lined up to head it. That is the way it looks to me now. It looks like a long time in Europe

Nijmegen, Oct. 21, 1944

Made a trip to Reims to look over the new camps at Suips and Sissonne. Flew over and drove through last war's battlefields. Most disheartening. Promotion came in yesterday. Fighting going along rather quietly. Germans definitely on the defensive, we are still awaiting the fall of Antwerp. The Philippines were invaded several days ago, too bad to have missed it.

Nijmegen, Oct. 27, 1944

Time flies in some ways. Gen Horrocks in yesterday. Predicted the date of the British attack as Nov. 10th. That should get us out of here by the 15th. I am prepared to stay until the 1st of December, we are making plans for our Thanksgiving dinner in the fox holes. Many visitors from the War Department and FAA/BA. We have a routine tour that we take them on now that takes them into Germany, near the front, to an OP where they can see the German fox holes. We can guarantee everything except the intensity of the firing. That the aides are trying to arrange. I am getting tired of the front. Six weeks without relief is a long time.

Nijmegen, Nov. 1, 1944

November, here it is. Fall, winter approaching and prospects of spending it in the trenches of the Lowlands. The front is definitely tougher. Last night the 325 lost six men killed and ten wounded with no prisoners captured. The other night two were killed. Tonight and for the next several nights we are not going out hoping that the Germans come after us. This is a hell of a way for us to have to fight. The best offensive troops in the theatre and we sit in fox holes for two months. The Germans are reported using dogs. The 504 quickly found the solution and rounded up the most attractive bitches in Nijmegen. Results uncertain. The British, so Billingslea says, are pinned down by digging four hundred yards to the front. The looming problem is in hand I believe although there are reports that continue to trickle in. Wedemeyer replaced Stilwell in China which means that Mountbatten rides high. Probably decided in Quebec. Wedemeyer knows nothing about infantry fighting nor how to command troops. Perhaps it will not be necessary, maybe Vinegar Joe knew too much about it. I am afraid that we will be available for the Rhine crossing show which I don't want no part of. This war here is going into next year. Boy! will we be tired of it by spring. In the next war we must plan on a scheme for providing short furles from the front. This continuous long period away from the homeland is not too good.

Nijmegen, Holland

Nov. 10th

About Nov. 6th Gen. Bull and Bonesteel came up for a visit. Bonesteel, I believe, is a hatchet man but not for me, I hope. The 7th Gen. Ridgway came up with a report from SHAEF G-1 on the subject of looting. Some of the allegations made by a dutchman of Gen. Krules clique were most serious. The SHAEF IG, Gen. Haines, came up the 8th and has been here since. A potentially serious situation. We are apparently all clear. We should be. Our relief by the Canadians is speeding along. Max Taylor hit yesterday, shrapnel in the leg. Jablonsky in as a War Dept. observer, said some significant things about Bud Miley. Despite this I cannot see him as an A/B higher unit commander. Jabo talks too much. The dutch political situation looks not too good. I am sympathetically inclined to look with favor upon the younger element headed by Prince Bernhard. Gen. Krules of the older reactionaries should be run out of office and control. To be here in between both of them with both sides endeavoring to prove the other side incapable of controlling the local civil population is most unsatisfactory.

Nijmegen, Holland

Nov. 13th

Turned over the sector to the 3rd Canadian Division at 0030 this morning so now am entirely free. Everything very quiet. Extremely quiet. The german is most probably concentrating in front of the 1st and 3rd US armies. It is heartbreaking to completely abandon this salient that we have given so many lives to obtain. Yesterday official notice was received that the Nejderrine was up to flood stage and that the germans could put the "island" under water. The "island" is all of the land between the Waal and the Nejderrine. extending out to the sea. The germans can put Elst under three feet of water in a matter of hours. Upon relief all infantry and eng. units march to Oost a distance of 23 miles. Quite a march for men who have been in fox holes for eight weeks. It has rained intermittently for the past several days so that the ground is generally rather muddy. Not a very pleasant prospect. The Canadians looked fine taking over. They have much better uniform discipline than I have. I have so damn much to do that I almost wonder at times how in the hell can I possibly do it. Lynch declined to come as asst. Div. Comd'r. I do not want Sink although he may be forced on me. Lindquist continues to do the wrong thing at the right time. Now reports reach me that he is favoring the 508 at Sissone where I have him in charge of all arrangements

Gen. Hains, the ETOUSA IG, is still with me checking on looting. Yesterday and the day before complete showdown inspections of the bags and musette bags of all men of the division were conducted. Units in the front lines are to be inspected today after their relief. I have never seen nor heard of anything like it, it is most unfortunate. The British moved out yesterday scott free taking with them cars and loot unlimited. ~~xx~~ Uncle Sam is known the world over for his generosity and these people are going to make the most of it. The men of the division have little if anything that they have not purchased or received as gifts. This is becoming a regular way of life, too regular. I don't want to get away from how to live in peace or how to live as a civilian but I am. No social contacts for eight weeks and I am getting to where I accept that as a normal state of affairs.

Sissone, France Nov. 15th

Arrived here the afternoon of the 13th. The 508th arrived yesterday the 14th. 504 due today. The Div Arty and the 505th are to be stationed at Suippes about 70 miles away. The Sissone area was occupied by the Germans, before that the French. It was a large post. The Germans had done an excellent job of training and the remains of their training arrangements show evidences of lots of work. If we have the time we should get a lot out of this stay. I am counting on three months. The weather will preclude any winter A/B ops. The only thing that will curtail our training will be the premature breakup of the present German government. This might necessitate an occupational mission into the heart of Germany itself. The problems of discipline are manifold.

Sissone Nov. 18th

One year ago today I arrived at Prestwick from Africa. Things are moving along, need our base echelon things badly. Had a long talk with Chaplain Woods. He and the other chaplains are very much concerned with the attitude of the men towards continued operations. They do not want to go to the Pacific feeling that they have already done more than their share. The four jump people are sweating out any more jumps feeling that they have used up about all of their luck. I understand exactly how they feel, I feel the same way myself. They have always done a fine job but now their ranks

are thinning, many of them are banged up from combat and hardly fit mentally or physically for further parachute operations yet they have no other prospects. It hardly seems right, there should be some way out other than being killed or wounded. There is no other now. Some day there is going to be a hell of a mess when complete units refuse to jump in combat again. There should be some relief for them or some promise of relief.

Sissone, Nov. 21st

21 planes from base over. Biggest trouble at the moment is with our lack of clothing and equipment that is being held up in base. Gen. Ridgway called yesterday. His hqrs moving over. I still have to make an effort to get along with that hqrs. It would be much easier if Eaton were out of there. An imported French show in last night, terrible but funny. It promises to be a long stretch here, I wouldn't be surprised if we were here in May. It is difficult to see how the United Nations can mount a large scale effective attack before spring. Any immediate show will no doubt be done by the 17th, later the 13th will be available. We can use a few months of rest and recreation as well as reorganization and training. This winter should bring to a head many problems in the European governments. There is a very strong and well armed underground movement afoot. In Holland my sympathies were with it. They are the people who risked their lives, gave their fortunes, sacrificed their careers and homes for an ideal of self government. They and they alone should have the say of how it should be created, not the reactionary entrenched interests. There will be bloodshed. The young vigorous resistance movements are not to be denied. I do not believe that they in any espouse the political ideology of Russia. In fact, most of them want no part of Russia. Russia and the communist party however wants part of them, wants, in fact, complete control of them if it is possible to get it. Therein lies the rub. They are and will be accused of being in sympathy because they are desirous of governing themselves, nothing could be farther from the truth, they want no part of communism, no more than they want part of the corrupt rotted governmental bodies of 1939 and 1940. The governments that precipitated them into a war, and a war that they lost, because of that government's lack of foresight and tolerance of corrupt individual practices. It will be a rough winter for many people in Europe. We have a rough time ahead of us in US, the war is barely started, if by war we include all of its implications, ramifications, and complications.

Sissone Nov. 28th

The reorganization and reequipping continues. Attended a Thanksgiving luncheon at the home of Gen Thrasher in Reims on the 23rd, met some nice French people. On Friday afternoon the 24th went to London. Travel time 2hrs. Landed at Northholt and obtained billets at the Grosvenor House. A most enjoyable night with Valerie. Went to Ciro's where they have an especially prepared and very good dinner. Saturday went to Cottesmore there had a short visit with Gen Clark of the 52nd Wing. Went to Leicester for lunch with Lt. Col. Ostberg the rear echelon comdr. Returned to London at 1500 and stayed overnight. Had a wonderful time, just what I needed. No champagne this night. Returned at noon Sunday and learned that Friday night in Reims troops of the division raised so much hell that at the request of the Oise Base Section CG, Gen Thrasher, all of our troops were restricted. Jumped right into the affair and had a meeting of all unit COs. A special guard is to be formed of one officer and ten NCOs from each regiment making a total of 5 and 50 hand picked guards. The number of men on pass are to be reduced to 5% instead of 10%. The trouble seems to center in three things. There is no way to get a girl of easy virtue, all houses are off limits and guarded, food cannot be bought in town anywhere, champagne can be bought by the bottle anywhere anytime. At present the situation is well in hand.

Sissone Dec. 14, 1944

Everything apparently in fine shape at last. Just concluded our war bond drive. Sold \$1,280,000 worth of bonds. A high per capita record for this theatre and we don't know about the other places. The payday troubles were at a minimum, probably as much due to the bond drive as anything. First three prizes get a trip to US. Gen. Lee, CG ETOUSA, called several days ago. Ostensibly to see his son. The talk led to the excellent appearance and behavior of our lads in Paris. Gen Lee said that he was talking to another general about their alert appearance and the other general said, "alert, you're damn right they look alert. Hell, you are looking at the survivors". The training is just getting under full steam. Everyone has been encouraged to take some time off, particularly after Bud Milner, C/S of the 101st committed suicide. The troubles with young officers are on the increase. I have four cases to be tried by general now. Rec'd a nice note from Martha Hemingway. She wrote a grand article for Colliers. She is a very nice person. Unusually nice for a War Correspondent. I have asked her up for our Prop Blast of the 19th.

Dec. 31, 1944

On Sunday the 17th received a warning order from Hqrs XVIII Corps to be ready to move on 12hrs notice to the front. A German attack was apparently making unprecedented headway between the first and third armies. First order received at 1900. At 2100 received notice to move as soon as possible. Order issued to the 82nd to move at 0900 the next day the 101st to move at 1400 the next day. Oise Base to provide the transportation. I left at 2300 for the CP of the US First Army arriving at 0900 the 18th. Things in an uproar: The Germans about ten miles away and coming on. CP at Spa Germans at Stavelot. Decided to put me at Whebarmont. Div started to arrive just before dark. First Germans, and AG of the 1st SS Div knocked out by a 30 Div road block at Hablemont at about 1800. Div concentrated and ready to move by daylight. A quick move executed to the line Trois Pont-Vielsalm-Salmchateau-Regne-Ffauture. Contact made with the 7th Armd, 106th, and 28th Divs which were almost cut off. Held line against determined and strong German attacks for several days during which time we mopped up the cut off spearheads of the 1st SS at Cheneaux, covered the extrication of the 7th Armd thru Vielsalm. Withdrew to the line Trois Ponts-Floret-Manhay. Right flank up in the air and never covered by the 3rd Armd Div nor the 7th Armd. Badly chewed up several German attacks against the new line. Right now today the Germans are thinning out on the division front and what the future holds is a big question. He is capable of making a very strong attack to the north out of his salient but on this front he is definitely falling back. What is the answer? This has been an experience the like of which I hope I never have again. It will be invaluable to me in future years. Our army has a hell of a lot to learn but at present these airborne troopers of this division are making monkeys out of the Germans opposing them. They are better trained and far superior combat soldiers. The German has better armor, panzer fausts, mines.

Nonceveaux Belgium Jan 14th

The division moved into a rest area extending from Chevron to Pepinster two days ago. We finally attacked and retook the Thier du Mont crossed the Salm at Grand Helleaux and entered Vielsalm and Salmchateau. In the attack we completely destroyed the 62nd Volksgrenadier Division taking 2500 prisoners incl 5 Bn COs. One Regt CO Col. Franke of the 190th committed suicide, his Adj. surrendered. He was guilty of advising his troops against taking prisoners so it is just as well that we did not get our hands on him. The division was wonderful in the